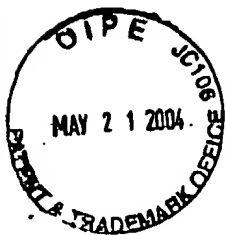


## STRAP RETENTION SYSTEM AND USES THEREFOR



### FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to fastening devices. In particular aspect, the present invention relates to a strap retention system ideally suited for watchbands and the like.

### BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The wristwatch is a commonly worn article. Other wrist-born devices such as tide timers (e.g., the Nixon SUPER HERO™), altimeters, pressure gauges, pedometers, and the like are becoming increasingly popular as well. Many of these devices make use of a strap having two free ends (as opposed to, for example, a metal bracelet with a flip catch) that are secured to one another, usually by means of an adjustable mechanism such as a buckle or similar securing mechanism.

One dilemma posed by the two piece strap with adjustable securing mechanism is what to do with the free end of the strap, once the strap has been adjusted to the desired size. If simply left to hang, the free end of the strap can work loose of the buckle thereby releasing the strap. Minimally, the free end is prone to get in the way if it is not secured in some manner. This problem is frequently dealt with by including retention loops near the buckle, for receiving the free end of the strap and maintaining it in close proximity to the other end of the strap (e.g., the end that has the buckle). Unfortunately, the retention loops can slide free of the strap end which is again left to hang loose. Securing the retention loops to the portion of the strap that is not hanging free prevents them from moving, but also limits the adjustability of the strap because the loops may not function properly over the full range of the strap's adjustability.

Any type of strap that is to be secured, for whatever purpose, may also suffer from the same problems described above. Examples, such as straps to secure luggage on a car roof, or the like, provide familiar instances where such problems may be encountered.

Approved for Entry. See 9/3/04